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conclusion is drawn that the school develops writing to an unnecessary degree of refinement. No correlation was found between excellence of writing and intellectual ability in adult women students.

FRANK N. FREEMAN

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Practical Algebra. First-Year Course. By JOS. V. COLLINS. New York: American Book Co., 1910. Pp. 301. \$0.85.

Professor Collins presents in his recent text, *Practical Algebra*, a book which will be appreciated by the progressive teacher of the subject. He has retained enough of the traditional theoretical course to make the development of the subject logically sound, and yet he has incorporated enough of the modern methods and topics to make the subject interesting and vital.

For the sake of brevity we shall simply enumerate the features of the book especially worthy of attention. The commendable features are: (1) the historical notes, especially such a table as presented on p. 275—a much-neglected but important topic of mathematics courses; (2) the selection of problems which emphasize the correlation of the branches of mathematics, physics, domestic science, and manual training; (3) the graphic work, scattered throughout the text where needed; (4) the needed emphasis on the importance of checking work; (5) the geometric representation of algebraic products; (6) the treatment of factoring, not too exhaustive in first presentation and given immediate application; (7) the list of common errors in fraction work; (8) the use of formulas derived from various sources for evaluation, transformation, and translation, both from English into algebraic symbolism and vice versa.

No book is perfect, and we shall consider the following as the defects of the text in question: (1) chaps. x and xi should have a more exhaustive treatment; (2) the formulas and applied problems and the formal drill problems seem insufficient in number; (3) there are no miscellaneous reviews. But surely we can forgive and forget these defects, which are minor in comparison with the numerous important advantages listed above. We repeat our commendation of the selections of problems, historical material, treatment of graphic work, and emphasis on checking.

C. B. WALSH

THE ETHICAL CULTURE SCHOOL
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The Teaching Botanist. By W. F. GANONG. New York: Macmillan, 1910. Pp. xi+439. \$1.25 net.

Botany for High Schools. By GEORGE F. ATKINSON. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1910. Pp. xvi+493. \$1.25.

Laboratory Botany. By WILLARD N. CLUTE. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1909. Pp. xiv+177. \$0.75.

These three books represent late contributions to the teaching of botany. All three authors are known to the botanical public and all have published books before this.

The new edition of Ganong's unique work on the pedagogical aspects of botany has been awaited with interest by teaching botanists. It does not disappoint. The first edition is here expanded in almost every part both by the introduction of material wholly new and by the elaboration of the previously treated topics. Especially notable is the addition of new material in the chapters on laboratories, collections, and books. The author has not feared to enter into the minor details which are so essential to success in these matters and has yet escaped making this part of his book dull and uninteresting. These chapters ought to prove a boon to isolated teachers who often do not know where to turn for supplies, books, and the like and who have no one of greater experience to whom they can appeal. Even those of broader experience will find the book invaluable as a compendium of details that one does not carry in his mind, as well as a source of fruitful suggestions regarding new methods which have been ripened in the author's experience.

The chapters on teachers and teaching retain their well-known excellence and have been considerably enlarged. They are too well known to need comment.

Mr. Atkinson has added a very serviceable book to the growing list of high-school texts in botany. There is a very evident effort to bring the subject-matter into relation with the experience of the pupils resulting in the introduction into the body of the text of a very considerable amount of economic material and applied science. The book has gained distinctly by thus recognizing the strictly scientific character and educational value of this body of material, which is too often relegated to a sort of unorganized appendix at the close of the book or omitted altogether. The process of assimilation might very well have been carried yet farther by making a similar disposition of the greater part of the last six chapters. Certainly "Economic Plants," "Ecology," "Plant Societies," and "Plant Breeding" are topics which are not entirely at home in a part which is devoted to "General Morphology."

It appears obvious that an elementary textbook ought to emphasize the unity of the subject rather than its divisions. This Mr. Atkinson does consistently, with the exception of the last six chapters, which contain the residuum of unclassified material referred to above. It is certainly open to question whether material has any place in a textbook if it cannot be brought into close relation with the plan of organization of the book.

The point of view is frankly structural in that the approach to every subject is through a study of the structures concerned. Naturally, Part I exhibits the familiar sequence of topics: seed, stem, root, leaf, and flower. In this respect the book is probably not quite up to the present practice of the schools, at least in the West. Many teachers now embody in their practice the idea that organs are to be interpreted as devices for the efficient performance of functions. The study of function therefore introduces the study of the organ. The inconsistencies which arise when the study of plant functions is dominated by the treatment of the organs is well illustrated by the attempt to place respiration as a leaf function.

The faults mentioned appeal to the secondary-school teacher as serious ones, but it must be remembered that they are not peculiar to this text. They are the faults of the whole class. Many of them are less evident in this book than in

its predecessors. The treatment of the topics is fresh, interesting, and teachable. The unity of the subject is well preserved, and the practical side is emphasized. The illustrations are well chosen and well executed. The language is not especially difficult, though it may be doubted whether it is entirely within the comprehension of first-year pupils. The book must be accepted as one of the best now available. It is to be regretted that it is marred by several unfortunate errors in English.

The book by Mr. Clute is the outgrowth of his experience in the high-school laboratory. It consists of detailed laboratory directions, most of which are on structural topics. Those teachers who do not prefer to write their own directions will find this book very useful.

The separation of the physiological experiments from the remainder of the work appears to favor a separation of physiological from structural study, which the author of the book would be quick to condemn.

To each chapter there is added a short glossary including such technical terms as are needed for the work outlined. The idea is a good one.

W. L. EIKENBERRY

THE UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL
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Representative English and Scottish Popular Ballads. By R. ADELAIDE WITHAM [Riverside Literature Series]. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909. Pp. 187. \$0.40.

The general editor, Professor W. A. Nielson, introduces the volume with the remark that it "is designed to meet the needs of a less advanced class of students than is provided for in the comprehensive collections of the late Professor Child or in the edition by Kittredge and Sargent in the Cambridge Poets series." And we may well believe that a niche has long been standing vacant which this volume is destined to fill. Narrative poetry of this type, belonging as it does to the youthful period of popular culture, is excellent for firing the schoolboy's imagination, and to this end should early be introduced into the curriculum. The editor, Miss Witham, has entered into her task with an enthusiasm that ought to infect the young reader and awaken an avid desire to know more of these popular ballads. Her introduction, which shows a good grasp of the subject and a genuine appreciation of the charm that is the ballad's, is written in an entertaining style, and is enlivened by numerous examples and comparisons relative to various phases of ballad study. It briefly discusses origins, structure, subject-matter, characteristics, versification, the later history, and the dates of the ballads.

Among the points calling for comment is naturally the portion dealing with origins, which is always a kittle question and must ever bear the brunt of attack. Suffice here to say that the editor reviews succinctly the three main theories current among literary folk today, with a leaning toward the camp headed by Professor Gummere. Superstition is present in far larger quantities than is implied in one of the editor's remarks; in fact, the pagan survivals are so numerous and so insistent as to give a distinct impress to the ballads, especially to that class called by Professor W. M. Hart the simple ballads of superstition.